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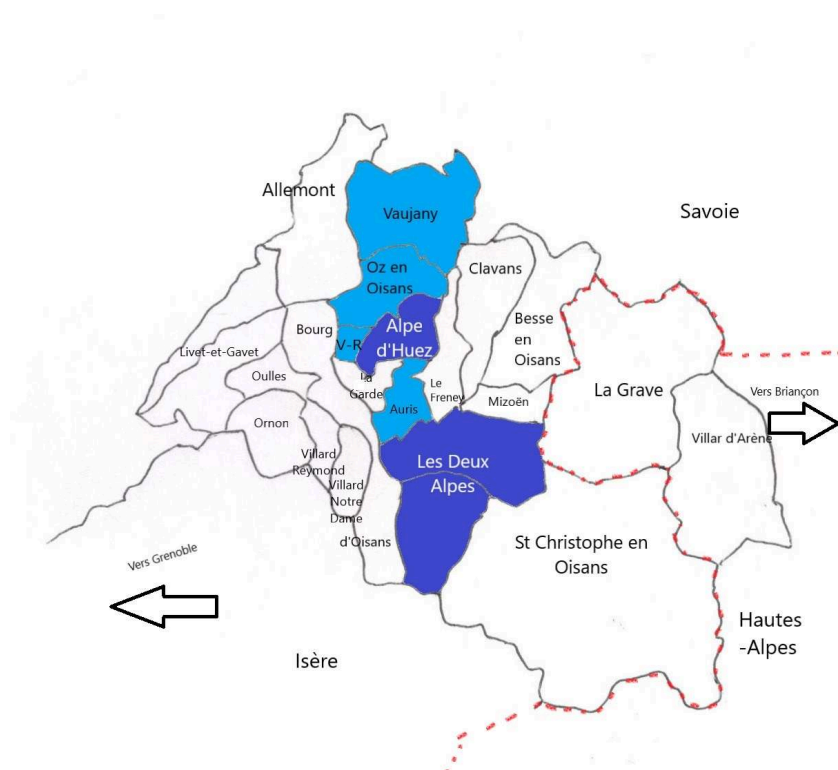


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Figure 1. The resort of Alpe d'Huez and its satellites, the resort of Les Deux Alpes



REALIZATION DOROTHÉE FOURNIER. SOURCE IGN 2011.

Socio-cultural transformations in mountain territory: a spatialized study of the innovation phenomenon

- 1 In the French Alps, the Oisans area is located at the junction of three departments: Isère, Hautes-Alpes and Savoie. Like other mountain areas, it has undergone many transformations over the course of its history. A land of pastoralism turned into an industrial area, it became a touristic place under the influence of mountaineering in the nineteenth century, and skiing in the twentieth century, thus demonstrating its ability to innovate (Attali, Dalmaso, Granet-Abisset 2014). Skiing has considerably impacted the economic situation of Oisans, as it turned from a climbing practice to a descent one, through the installation of the first ski lifts (Alpe d'Huez 1936, Les Deux Alpes 1938). In relation to the "Glorious Thirty" and the rise of alpine skiing, resorts benefit from the recommendations of experts, such as geographers, who are planning a far-reaching regional plan implemented with powerful means, and in collaboration with political decision-makers (Veyret-Verner 1959). This leads to organizing the Oisans area around two poles of attractiveness, Alpe d'Huez and Les Deux Alpes ski resorts. Their success reflects neither the same socio-cultural characteristics of the visitors nor the same strategic choices of the stakeholders who welcome them. According to Germaine Veyret's precepts, it is about becoming a resort of Dauphiné as luxurious as Megève in Savoie for one (by offering comfort, quality and excellent service in hotels), and to meet the sports expectations of the middle classes for the other (by relying on reasonable prices, a young environment and a decent comfort). From that moment on, this distribution leads to a differentiated orientation depending on the customers, the built and planned infrastructure, as well as the sports administration. In terms of space, a network is created around the Alpe d'Huez resort (junction with Villard-Reculas through a ski-lift in 1946), which led to the construction of new resorts in the 1980s (Auris, Oz en Oisans, Vaujany), while Les Deux Alpes¹ operates "in a vacuum". At this time, an unfavourable economic climate is challenging the success of winter sports. Faced with this crisis of French skiing, a new sport imported from the United States, snowboarding, an offshoot of the Californian counterculture, starts spreading out in France. It brings a new breath to the Oisans area, allowing it to maintain its touristicity. Against a backdrop of heightened international competition, the resorts' strategy owes nothing to chance and helps attract customers. The new practice and territory unite in the name of mutual benefit. While meeting economic expectations, snowboarding offers a place to new values that shake up the established order.
- 2 Therefore, we can ask ourselves how the territory will react to these neo-practitioners. What are the characteristic representations of the practice? Which mechanisms influence stakeholders towards novelty and what are the consequences on the territorial level? Based on a localized example, the object of our interest here is the analysis of the establishment and development trajectory of snowboarding. We focus on the different logics of operators that lead to turn this practice into a lever of territorial transformations of which the Oisans area bears the marks today. The asymmetrical appropriation by the territory makes the follow-up of this trajectory particularly interesting. The changes that have been made include the modification of the playing field, the vision on the practice, the reorganization of the supervision structures, as well as the consequences in terms of spatial reconfiguration (the latter

having been achieved by reinventing skiing) lead to question the specificity of the development of the snowboard in the Oisans area linked to the singularity of this territory. After a pioneering period marked by the emergence of excursionism, mountaineering and then skiing, the history of the transformation of Oisans through sports leisure practices is characterized by the development of mass tourism, which is materialized by the development of winter sports resorts.

- 3 After the effervescence of the 1960s, a period of tourism maturity started in the 1980s, pushing for diversification in a context of global change in which the environmental issue becomes central. We wanted to investigate a temporal context which makes new practices visible and put our case study in the debate that currently drives the Oisans area in terms of restructuring around so-called innovative practices.
- 4 The contribution of outdoor sports and open-air activities to the phenomenon of sport diversification has generated a number of questions in different disciplinary fields (Augustin 2002; Attali 2007; Rech et Mounet 2011). Alternative practices, including snowboarding, have been the subject of many works (Loret 1995; Humphreys 1997; Reynier et Vermeir 2007; Coates, Clayton, et Humberstone 2010; Bourdeau and Le Breton 2013) in which socio-cultural perspectives (Corneloup 2007) and representations play an important part. These analyses are useful in the chosen approach. The necessity for some form of injunction for stations to reconsider the new expectations of practitioners (Perrin-Malterre 2015) must also be taken into account. Snowboarding, through the transformations it has generated, whether they be social, cultural or territorial, has brought out reflections in various fields of social sciences in a privileged way. Several studies have examined the behaviour of snowboarders (Mueller et Peters 2008; Reynier et Chantelat 2013). Other researchers wondered about the reconfigurations of the space related to specific arrangements of snowparks (Curtet 2007; Pabion-Mouriès et al. 2016). We question territoriality in a broader way as a consequence of these reflections. Mountain sports activities are marked by a very strong and innovative dynamic (Attali et Saint-Martin 2015). The new mountain practices stimulate a recent research by carefully analysing the innovation, a concept on which our study is based. However, the perception of the innovative process varies considerably according to the approaches (Gaglio 2011; Boutroy, Vignal, et Soulé 2015). Technological innovation often remains central (Kasprzak et Perrin 2017). By applying the concept forged by Norbert Alter to sports (Alter 2013), we choose to investigate several notions in light of what he describes as a process punctuated by successive sequences (Akrich, Callon, et Latour 2006). By emphasizing the novelty of the ways things are done, the collective aspect of the process, its banality, its virtuosity, its contingency, the latent deviances and beliefs, or the social interactions that shape innovation, it is possible to get to the heart of the process.
- 5 Our work is articulated as follows: an analysis of the innovation trajectory of snowboarding from the networks of stakeholders, while highlighting the underlying territorial transformations (Mao, Hautbois, et Langenbach 2009; Rech et Paget 2017). Thus, we postulate that innovation is an appropriate invention, therefore de/reterritorializing. The characteristics of snowboarding make it possible to analyse its acceptability according to the greater or lesser receptivity of the socio-historical context. Innovation results from the capacity of the players to influence the territorial organization (cultural and social system on the scale of the territory), whose sociological properties must be observed. We are particularly attentive to the

sequences of appropriation as they highlight the interdependence of the operators. On the one hand, this allows us to demonstrate the faculty of incorporation of this modality to the territory, thus leading to its transformation and on the other hand, the necessity for the practice to transform itself in accordance with the territory. The first stage of the process results from the action of a few marginal individuals. The second stage is that of swarms of imitators reproducing and managing innovations in a more or less violent context. The third one is characterised by some stabilisation. The theoretical framework combines the contributions of the sociology of the organizations through the analysis of stakeholders' networks to those of cultural geography, in order to understand the modalities, phases and challenges of de/reterritorialization. The protocol of data collection aims to evaluate the representations of the operators as a prerequisite to implementing actions. The corpus mainly mobilizes three types of sources. The first one brings together a selection of articles from the daily newspaper *Le Dauphiné Libéré* (DL) from 1960 to the present day. After a quantitative treatment by theme, the most significant texts were screened for content analysis. This source, sometimes considered too "local", is very rich and essential in a territorialized perspective. The recurrence of events in the columns of the DL serves as an indicator of the degree and form of incorporation of the practice into the territory, through the representations it offers. Often a stakeholder or event organizer, the DL positions itself as a servant of local authorities. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the reality of the facts interpreted by the institutional operators, also called the organizing form, holding the legitimacy to which the press serves as a justification support for action. The newspaper takes part in the development of a system of representation by declassifying what can be declassified. Considering the limits of this source (absence of conflicts, normative writing, complacency with institutional actors), we learn a lot about collaborative networks and valued issues. A second type of source was considered, bringing together the reports of the municipalities and the community of communes. A third source has been necessary to identify perceptions, especially those of dissident agents. We used testimonials from operators, especially the followers of the new practices. The collection of interviews is based on the witness's multi-belonging to his network. It consists of twenty-seven preliminary or additional phone interviews and seventeen semi-structured interviews. The voluntary flexible analysis grid (Kaufmann 2004) focuses on identifying sports practices and territorial issues. Finally, we also consulted secondary sources (private archives of operators, other media).

Snowboarding, a sports innovation that upsets the established order

- 6 Snowboarding is characterized by unusual, sometimes deviant attitudes that generate negative representations. This logic of distinction to which snowboarders respond is qualified at different levels. Since they belong to the same community, they free themselves from the slopes by assuming their own responsibility, both in terms of avalanche and accident risks. They stand out because of their outfit and have a different connection to competition. Being pioneers, innovators are not considered that way. While skiers think of the resort as a place to revitalize themselves, snowboarders see it more as an outlet. This reflects on the harsh judgments against them, they are regarded as "hackers" with clandestine practices. Skiers think of them

as illegitimate users. They blame snowboarders for avalanches, because they practice off-piste skiing². This phenomenon of attribution (Heider 1958), focuses on the negative aspects and conceals others (a dynamic and curious youth). The abuses to which some of them choose to indulge in reminds us of the notion of active minority (Becker 1966; Moscovici 1979) inclined to misbehaviour to legitimize its existence. The image of the resorts deteriorates, as the abuses are relayed by journalists. Conflicts of use and access bans appear due to the constant development of snowboarding. The media coverage of the accidents creates an anxiety-inducing atmosphere. However, if we take into account the first statistical survey conducted by SEATM (State Institute charged with the observation of the economics of mountain tourism) on snowboarding, during the winter of 1994-1995, snowboarders only represent 5,9% of ski resorts practitioners³.

- 7 During the first phase of appropriation, the practice is influenced by existing codes. In the Oisans area, the hosting of snowboarding in its alpine form is consistent with the socio-cultural structuring of the territory based on ski racing. The power of traditional organizations (federation, union, educational entities, managers) predisposes its orientation. However, innovators do have the ability to create new equipments. Some people import them, others like to design their own models, and without edges, those are exclusively meant to be used in powder snow. These elements emphasize that technology is not an “autonomous foundation”. Sociocultural and technological innovations cannot exist without each other. The technique carries within it the meanings of the social reality of the moment. For example, detachable chairlifts are great assets to facilitate the disembarkation of snowboarders, but many ski resorts still equipped with fixed-grip chairlifts make the exercise difficult, which harms the pace, as falls force the chairlift to stop. The equipment is new, but behaviours remain modelled on ski codes. The Vaujany Sports Club hosts national and international snowboarding events in the hope that they will become a springboard for the organization of alpine ski competitions, as they are more renowned⁴. However, a cultural transition occurs with the evolution of the modalities of practice. The transition from alpine to freestyle snowboarding gives it a clearer empowerment and further separates it from downhill skiing. In fact, snowboarding (3,9% of practitioners) decreased in favour of freestyle (4,2%) during the winter of 1995-1996⁵. Alpine snowboarding respects skiing requirements and carved turns, a philosophy that relegates this method to the benefit of freestyle which favours aesthetics, and allows skidding, since turning is no longer a reference. Maxence Idesheim, a teacher in the prestigious ski and alpinism school ENSA, opposes the technical limitation of alpine snowboarding to the fun aspect of freestyle and the comfort of soft boots, which made it accessible to the masses⁶. By using explosives, ski resorts eliminate obstacles on the slopes to quickly bring pleasure to practitioners. Freestyle is a transposition of urban boardsports, a trend that permeates mountain territories including the Oisans. Practitioners no longer come from the ranks of skiers. Snowboarding attracts a younger and more urban audience, influenced by the culture of skateboarding, whose rebellious image is characterized by the identity affirmation of a counter-cultural dynamic. It uses places and codes that deviates from official regulations.
- 8 In this context of cultural transformation, social relations are typical of a collective competence allowing innovation to unfold. In particular, the degree of cooperation between the operators is taken into consideration in the success and the form taken by the process. In this reticular system, some individuals act as transmitting agents. Joel

Franitch plays this role given his different functions⁷. As the snowboarding technical director of the French Ski Federation (FFS), commissioned to spread the practice of snowboarding, he acknowledges that his network facilitates the organization of competitions. The resorts trust him. He has a strong influence over the players of the territory who act according to normative beliefs, to respect the requirements of the FFS. Despite this favourable network, the Oisans refuses to engage in the development of snowboarding. A first competition labelled by the FFS is hosted, not out of enthusiasm, but to comply with the institutional incentive. Negative representations continue to carry weight. A financial reality (the sharing of resources between skiing and snowboarding) can be added to the fantasy of snowboarding, in contradiction with the federal state of mind. The clubs' financial resources come from the sale of federal licenses (*carte-neige*) and they do not receive anything from the sale of snowboard licenses managed by the French Snowboard Association (AFS), a rival association. Tensions form around the new practice, a conveyor of strong economic and political stakes. The FFS started to structure the practice by setting up a monoski-snowboard delegation in 1986 and early snowboarders⁸ created the AFS on September 26 1987 according to the vision of a professional system and claiming its independence in comparison with the federal system. This will to structure the practice is the evidence of the political and sports pressures, as well as the financial interests at stake. Just like in the world of tennis, the AFS is designing a national and international professional circuit. The desire to control snowboarding triggers a conflict of legitimacy between the FFS, the Olympic delegate and the AFS, the organizer of the trials. The tensions linked to the institutionalization of snowboarding have an impact on the Oisans. In the spring of 1993, following the split with the AFS, the Vaujany⁹ sports club organizes the French FFS Championships, which are vehemently contested by the AFS. While the new type of gliding generates antagonisms in many resorts, the sports develops particularly well in Les Deux Alpes, whose dynamics can be explained by several factors. First of all, the resort takes advantage of a favourable context when it adopts a policy focused on the youth in the 1960s. Secondly, the practice builds its influence through a club. Created in 1988 by the champion Luc Péliçon, Team 2 Alpes takes part in competitions and solicits sponsors. Thanks to the performances of the club, the tourist office and the Deux Alpes Loisirs company (DAL) rely on its results to promote the resort. Third factor, the personality of the leader of DAL, Henri Brac de la Perrière, as well as the positioning of the company, promote the spread of the phenomenon. As an entrepreneur and innovator (Schumpeter 1935) or a Lead User (Von Hippel 2005), the CEO himself practices snowboarding. He participates in the promotion of the novelty he believes in. His influence is a key part of the success of the process. The director's innovative behaviour consists in admitting the prescribed goal: the development of winter sports, while choosing not to accept the rules by moving towards snowboarding. This independence of means and ends is based on a special event that will help propel the ski resort into snowboard territory. The *Mondial du Snowboard* event organized in Les Deux Alpes offers rapid international visibility. The first editions highlight the accessibility of the show¹⁰ and announce a number of competitors in alpine snowboarding¹¹. From its creation, the event is associated with the values of the counterculture (party, deviance). It stands out as the "Snowboard Woodstock"¹², in reference to the symbol of the festival of hippie culture. DAL is in favour of hosting this pre-season manifestation on the glacier as it intends to promote the funicular that was set up on July 29 1989, so as to takes tourists to the summit. In the mid-1990s, the

Mondial evolves significantly towards freestyle, according to a more alternative register. The 1996 event showcases “big air, snowpark, pipe, film festival and something new: a village of exhibitors in the ski resort”, the one of 1999 announces “pipe, snowpark, world games, international boardercross, big air, skate, BMX”¹³. The different activities and shows are based on gestural promotion. In search of sensations, the public acclaims the game, and the excess. These principles are economically exploited. The promotion of the equipment is carried out by communicating on the alternative values, in order to answer to a clientele which symbolically rejects social conformity by deciding to purchase. The *Mondial* opens to more spectacular sports than the slalom. The urban frame of reference is accentuated. On this multiform playground in which the BMX finds its place, snow does not become absolutely essential.

What contribution does snowboarding make to territoriality?

- 9 The trajectory of innovation is subject to dyschronia, that is to say spaces that do not evolve at the same pace depending on the capacity of learning and reflexivity of the social body. In Les Deux Alpes, the interactions between the operators and their environment lead to the construction of a representation of Les Deux Alpes as a snowboarding territory¹⁴ whose footprint is still present today. In this regard, Henri Brac de la Perrière emphasizes the efforts made to encourage media-friendly snowboarders to become frequent visitors of the resort. Freestyle Land (the name of the snowpark) is an essential stake to which the company devotes considerable investments¹⁵. In direct competition with Alpe d'Huez, which retains a traditional posture, the head of DAL relies on the undisciplined image of the new practice. It justifies a positioning which favors quantity in consistency to the mass sport, in relation to the generated increase in wealth. Les Deux Alpes offers a snowboarding product meeting the wishes of the practitioners (students of the Grenoble Université Club, works councils) through accommodation, events and an enticing communication. Luxury hotels do not appeal to the targeted customers. However, at international level¹⁶, the number of enthusiasts decreases¹⁷, the status of "snowboarding spot" persists in Les Deux Alpes, a ski resort in which the practice serves a strategy involving taking a different positioning to be at the top of the ranking. This representation of a pioneering resort is based on the developments that have been implemented. Inspired by skateparks, three tables¹⁸ and a gap¹⁹ were installed during the 1995-1996 winter in Les Crêtes area²⁰. The following winter²¹, DAL set up its first permanent snowboard-park at La Toura, including a big air, a boardercross and a half-pipe in natural valleys, to satisfy the demand²². The seeming anteriority of Les Deux Alpes engraved in collective memory is interesting to analyze because the Alpe d'Huez resort is in fact a precursor. Before the appearance of the concept of boardsports on trail maps (1994-1995), Alpe d'Huez invests in 1989 in a first concrete half-pipe. However, minds are neither ready to support the infrastructure, nor to think of the technological necessities it needs (it does not take into account the exposure to the sun). This example reminds us that innovation involves a temporal amplitude as well as learning abilities. It also shows that innovators cannot contribute alone to its development. Innovation depends on the degree of involvement of different stakeholders. Any new practice is part of a set of existing practices which it remains dependent of (Gras 2003). This trend explains that

the transformation of uses by snowboarding lies in the ability of the operators to take this into account, as well as how the practice influences the ecosystem. Technical transformations, often considered as the only constituent elements of the phenomenon (Godin 2017) are an integral part of a wider process of socio-cultural innovation. Like any innovation, the technique is subject to uncertainties. It requires studies, tests and time before becoming operational. The adaptation of the ski lifts built shows that an arrangement is essential for the use of snowboarding. The conversion of the ski carriers leads to an increase in the size of the cabins, thus leading to storage problems, as the contour paths are not adapted. The vigilance of the staff makes it less effective. The technology, which seems obvious today, slowly adapts to the practice of snowboarding: "Today we cannot imagine a lift that does not integrate snowboards and parabolic skis"

23.

- 10 Ski instructors have to get used to the upheaval of sports ethics. The French Ski School (ESF) integrates these cultural changes while favoring hedonism to asceticism. From 1992 to 2011, its slogan was "Pleasure has to be learned". Since then, it abandoned the notion of learning to favor well-being. Its slogan then becomes "For fun". The ESF of Les Deux Alpes is successfully taking over the new activity. DA Camp instructors, an internship program created in the winter of 2007-2008 and sponsored by Rip Curl, wear the sponsor's clothing. The ESF, which organizes the training courses, plays the institutional erasure, since the cliché of the ski instructor dressed in red does not ease the commitment of the young public. The integration of the practice by the ESF of Les Deux Alpes shows a desire to address the youth. As a proof of this involvement, a kindergarten is specially dedicated to young learners in 2007. Instructors take part in technological developments. Alexis Parmentier, world snowboard champion in 1993, created a prototype for two (monitor-student) with four bindings, allowing the beginner to feel the tilt of the body during the turns. As for the babysnow, a hybrid of a tricycle and a snowboard which was invented by mountain guide and ski instructor Eric Arnol, it aims to share moments of sliding on the snow safely with a child before he or she learns how to walk. New sports activities partly contribute to question professional structuring since older instructors are not familiar with these methods.

Phase of reorganization of the territory: stabilization and regression

- 11 Innovation is not a sudden appearance, but a long process of influences and mutual contributions. "The snowboard was the offspring of the ski, the current ski is the child of the snowboard"²⁴. To help skiing²⁵, snowboarding redirects its image in a perspective of rejuvenation. The early 90s marked a transfer of technology from snowboarding to skiing with the invention of parabolic skis. This equipment is accessible to beginners and offers sensations of curves similar to those of snowboarding. Skiers make the use of both carved turns and snowparks. Snowboarding is therefore on the initiative of freestyle skiing. Thus, depending on the field in which it is implanted, innovation does not produce the same effects. Alpe d'Huez is more easily attracted by freestyle skiing because of the skicross results of its champion Ophélie David, multiple medalist in international competitions and the X Games. This leads to the use of boardercross in snowboarding in Les Deux Alpes and in skiing in Alpe d'Huez. The third stage of the process is a stabilization phase. The activity is institutionalized. This stage is

characterized by a regression of the push of innovation during which the widely diffused sport no longer appears to be deviant. If snowboarding impacts the skiing conditions through standardization, spaces initially equipped for the use of snowboarders no longer differentiate the different types of practitioners. The activity undergoes a phenomenon of sportivization and far from the "out of sync image", the activity is nowadays trivialized. According to a mechanism of reflexivity, it integrates into the social body by questioning the representations established in this regard. The "bohemian" side of snowboarding has disappeared.

- 12 Since the creation of the snowparks, restricted spaces allowing tracks users not to mix up, snowboarding has largely contributed to transform the whole ski areas by conveying a new lifestyle. More than a renewal of skiing, it has helped to transform leisure in the mountains within their relationship to space. Snowboarding has worked to reverse the norm, with the creation of zones dedicated to both skiers and snowboarders.
- 13 In Les Deux Alpes, Salomon opened in 2002 a shop offering a "new slides" ski service including the ski pass, equipment and freeride instructor detached by the Bureau des Guides. In 2003, the Slide concept, offered by a private operator at DAL, is set up on the ski slopes. These are gliding areas developed for an extended clientele. This shows a new way of consuming leisure. The ski area is punctuated by modules stepped between *La Toura* (2600 m.) and the foot of the glacier (3200 m.). This space includes two boardercross courses, waterfalls, a cornice, a canyon (a course with banked turns), a corridor with 35 degrees verticality. High altitude theme park, it reflects the adaptations to the new desires of the clientele, the search for extreme sensations coming closer to the notion of fate characterizing the recreational activities (Valleur 2009), while guaranteeing the "zero risk". This leads to the creation of a new standard within ski areas offering infrastructures that exist today in many international resorts. In Alpe d'Huez "Marcel's Farm", in Méribel the "Yéti Park". These materialize a process of reorganization of the territory, making it more recreational and accessible. The mountain itself is no longer enough. These transformations show a search for sensations, for new considerations of space and cultural aspirations, in contradiction with another desire, naturalness.
- 14 The stabilization in which one can find any end-of-cycle innovation seems to be reached concerning snowboarding but since the process is never completed, it carries on by transforming the practice. On one side, a more manageable material develops, such as the Fish²⁶. The machine facilitates the movements in powder snow through maximum flotation. The ecological aspect is put forward. Burton adopts a sustainable development approach with an FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified collection and recycled materials. Another development trend is marked by a desire for direct contact with nature. The Splitboards split in two to be used as skis, offering easy access to hiking for average skiers and good snowboarders²⁷. Although Fish and Splitboards remain quite scarce, no brand neglects them. This reinforces the hyper segmentation of a mature market in a competitive context, as well as the hyper diversification and the hybridization of practices. This new equipment leads practitioners to use the territory differently. The underlying trend of returning to nature and seeking freedom is partly taken into account by managers who offer routes along the slopes²⁸. The new links to space refer to the notion of aroundoor, (Bourdeau, Mao, et Corneloup 2011), a transition between the total artificialization of the resort and the naturalness of the

wilderness, which inspires the development of the trail stations and their winter counterpart "Espace Ski de Rando".

- 15 The end of Mondial du Snowboard and Mondial du Ski in 2008 shows another sign of stabilization. The reasons given by the CEO of DAL are due to a series of climatic hazards that have worn out the stakeholders and very especially the leading brands. This argument highlights the influence of trading partners over the sustainability of an event and the dependence of practices to a system of interrelations. The positioning of Tignes, who copies the event to attract manufacturers, illustrates the territorial rivalry: "The idea of the event started [...] with a collaborator [...] but it never recreated in the same way [...] Tignes had baited some manufacturers"²⁹. This "reinvention" refers to the idea of "creative reinterpretation" (Linton 1936), according to which the cultural traits of an innovation are not owned as such. They circulate by being adopted and transformed from one geographical area to another, producing a mechanism of recreation rather than invention. Imitation exists but the meanings attributed to the event vary according to contexts. Other reasons explain the suppression of the *Mondial* snowboard and ski events. The possibility of selling DAL to Compagnie des Alpes (CDA), which became effective at the end of 2009, calls into question the event strategy aside from the priorities of the CDA. Municipal elected officials wish to reorient themselves towards less expensive activities. Finally, there are differences of opinion regarding a target of customers challenged by different operators, who can even prevent the continuation of the event³⁰. Snowboarders are accused of public order disturbances: "We were summoned to the Prefecture because there were too many abuses [...] The Prefect told us: "this must stop ""³¹. The organizers are asked to make the demonstration more acceptable from a moral point of view and thus decide to make it less attractive. The standardization of events leads them to be copied, outbidding in a context of increased rivalry related to the regression of the innovative thrust:
- 16 "The snowboard world has run out. Snowboarding has decreased, so the *Mondial du Ski* has been created. And then the brands refused to come to Les Deux Alpes anymore, because other resorts said: "You are welcome here" [...]. When you participated eight times to the Mondial [...] you know exactly what will happen [...] The stock is not inexhaustible"³².
- 17 Innovation is a form of destruction. As any innovative practice is taken in interactions with those already present, the identification of the territory by an activity prevents its definition by others. Their confrontations constrain the development of each one. Nowadays, the terrain cannot be experimented upon in the same way. New development trends are reducing the space for traditional snowboard instruction, or even eliminating the original tracks that are ideal for pedagogical progression. This situation is similar to the end of the activity's life cycle. Can we claim the snowboard is dead? The operators interviewed in the report of Riding Zone magazine³³, all very involved in the world of winter sports³⁴, have made some unquestionable findings: the practice is now at a critical time of its history. The decline in the number of followers does not encourage the most decisive operators to support it. In these conditions, the definition of the territory through snowboarding reaches a threshold.
- 18 Finally, its durability is to be questioned in regard to the snow resource. After four days of closure of the glacier in Les Deux Alpes in early August 2017 due to high winds and high temperatures³⁵, on All Saints' Day, the dome does not open³⁶, for the first time in the history of the resort. This situation questions the existence of "new gliding"

developments in the face of climate change³⁷. Carlo Carmagnola, head of research projects in the ski areas at Dianeige, points out that snowparks claim five times more snow than a standard ski slope and require major work that calls into question their sustainability. More generally, they bring the winter sports system to light, in a context of climate change when Dominique Marcel, CEO of the CDA, compares the resorts to theme parks³⁸. In Alpe d'Huez, "Marcel's Farm" was created in 2016 without a permit or an impact study and is denounced by the Mountain Wilderness association. The French Regional nature conservation organization (FRAPNA) filed a complaint on September 6, 2016. The use of "cultivated snow, guaranteed 100% natural " is thought of as the only solution to ensure sufficient snow. How about the absence of snow below 2000 meters as such was the case in December 2016 in Les Deux Alpes, forcing the resort to suggest an early return between 1 and 3 pm to avoid the long queues at the descent, even though customers had paid for an all-day ski pass. The situation requires a restriction of the practice, as it modifies the conception of tourism.

Conclusion

- 19 In the 1980s, the arrival of new users within ski areas is a source of conflict. They are considered a nuisance, but they must nevertheless be taken into account because of their constant increase. Thanks to the types of practices that they promote and the principles that structure them, snowboarders are a lever for territorial transformation. This innovation is not a sudden appearance but a long process. Snowboarding deeply changes the image of skiing. By conveying new ways of doing things, it helps to transform mountain leisure activities within their relationship to space. The reversal of the norm is concretized by a process of reorganization of the territory and a more recreational redefinition. Even though they are now ordinary infrastructures, altitude amusement parks show it. The establishment and development of snowboarding ensure the maintenance of tourism in the territory. Now marked by a decrease in its number of followers, the activity enters a phase of regression. Since it is a never-ending process, the use of equipment in keeping with ecologist aspirations and the search for naturalness, re-examines the ability of sports practices to reinvent the Oisans.

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NOTES

1. The municipalities of Mont de Lans and Venosc which constitute the resort of Les Deux Alpes with the commune of St Christophe en Oisans, merged on 1 January 2017.
2. Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, 4 janvier 1995, « Avalanches, les surfeurs mis en cause ». Online. <http://fresques.ina.fr/montagnes/liste/recherche/r%C3%A9verbel/s#sort/-pertinence-/direction/DESC/page/1/size/10>. Viewed on 21 March 2017.

3. SEATM. « La pratique des nouvelles glisses. Suivi pluri-annuel par enquête sur les passages aux remontées mécaniques », 2004.
4. Interview with Joël Franitch, 23 March 2017.
5. SEATM. « La pratique des nouvelles glisses. Suivi pluri-annuel par enquête sur les passages aux remontées mécaniques », 2004.
6. Interview with Maxence Idesheim, 28 March 2017.
7. Ski instructor at ENSA between 1985 and 1998, Snowboard technical director at the FFS from 1992 to 1998, SNMSF's new snow sports contact from 1985 to 2011, team leader on major events (OG and WCS) from 1998 to 2005, snowboard sports director from 2007 to 2011 at the FFS, with the FIS from 2011 to 2013, French representant on the snowboard committee and chairman of the group for snowboard regulations from 1994 to 2011.
8. Fusion of the French Unified Federation of the Snow (FFUG) and the French Association of Snowboarding (AFSN).
9. « Création d'un club des sports », *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, local edition, 12 December 1991.
10. Flyer of the first editions.
11. Among them : Jean Nerva, Serge Vitteli, Éric Rey, Jean-Phi Garcia, Philippe Imhoff, Franck Moranval, Luc Péliçon.
12. Posters 1996, 1997, 1999.
13. Posters 1996 and 1999.
14. ODDOUX Franck, *Snowboard*, Paris, E.P.A., 1998, p.121 sqq.
15. The diagnosis was made because of stagnant satisfaction and heterogeneous returns. *Rock agency*, snowpark diagnosis. Sources: DAL.
16. "In the United State where snowboarding is much more important than in Europe, the number of practitioners has decreased by 28% between 2003 and 2013, according to the National Sporting Goods Association », In, Dubas, S., *Le Temps « Le snowboard se cherche un nouveau souffle »*, Published on 13 February 2015.
17. At the ESF ski school in Les Deux Alpes, where snowboarding is particularly well represented compared to other ski resorts, it is stagnating and even slightly decreasing. In 2017 it represents between 8% and 10% of the turnover of the ski school according to the snowboard manager.
18. Module to jump, consisting of a kicker, an overflight zone and a landing zone.
19. Module consisting of a momentum, a moat and a reception.
20. FOURNIER Jack, *Raconte-moi... les Deux Alpes*, Les Deux Alpes, self-publishing, 2018, p. 170.
21. Ski slopes map in which the word "park" appears for the first time. Private archives, Maxime Petre.
22. Interview with Henri Brac de la Perrière, 26 December 2016.
23. Interview with Lionel Albertino, graphic designer at Deux Alpes Loisirs, who started his career as a ski lift operations officer, 17 January 2017.
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25. Serraz, G., « Les nouvelles glisses au secours du ski », In, *les Echos.fr*, 10 November 1997. Website accessed on 2 April 2017, available at: https://www.lesechos.fr/10/11/1997/LesEchos/17519-129-ECH_les-nouvelles-glisses-au-secours-du-ski.htm
26. Fish-shaped, short and handy board, approaching the sensations of water surf.
27. Interview cited with Maxence Idesheim.
28. In Les Deux Alpes since the winter of 2016-2017.
29. Interview cited with Henri Brac de la Perrière.
30. D.M., « Violents incidents en marge du mondial de Surf », *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, Grenoble edition, 24 October 2005.

31. Interview with Gilles Vanheule, director of the tourist office of Les Deux Alpes, 6 April 2017.
 32. Ibidem.
 33. « *Enquête le snowboard est-il mort ?* », In, Riding Zone, Youtube channel [Online]. Accessed 12 December 2017. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYJbes1VChQ&feature=share>
 34. Sophie Rodriguez, Gérard Rougier, Gaylord Pedretti, Morgan Le Faucheur, Julien Haricot, Luc Faye, Clémence Grimal et Mirabelle Thovex, Valérie Bourdier, Johann Baisamy.
 35. Chandellier, A., « Entre déficit hivernal et grandes chaleurs estivales, la station des Deux Alpes, pour préserver son glacier, va installer six enneigeurs en septembre. Une première en France », *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, Grenoble edition, 15 August 2017.
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ABSTRACTS

The transformations that Oisans has faced over the course of its history invalidates the idea that this mountain territory would live in self-sufficiency, without the inability to innovate. The situation of the 1980s considerably compromises the success of mountain tourism. Driven by the Californian counterculture, the innovation transmitted by snowboarding allows the Oisans to maintain its touristic character, while transforming the socio-cultural dimension of the territory. This article is based on a collection of data (municipal and intercommunal archives, interviews, regional daily press) to capture the development of representation systems of territorial operators. Focusing on the mechanisms of interrelations, this research wants to analyse the social process of innovation by breaking down the sequences that punctuate it, according to the operators, times and places, in order to characterize the repercussions on territoriality.

INDEX

Keywords: snowboard, innovation, (principle of) territoriality, Oisans, winter sports

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